



UTAH

Insurance Department



August 2004 Newsletter

Company and Agent Search

NEW to our website is the *Company and Agent Search* page. This new search page allows an individual to obtain license and contact information about a company, agency or producer licensed to do business in Utah. All you need to know is the licensee's name or license number. Even if you only know the last name of an individual or the first part of the company name you will be able to pull up a list to choose from.

Once you find who you want the following information will be available to you:

- ▶ the license status, its effective and expiration date;
- ▶ the lines of insurance the licensee is authorized to sell;
- ▶ the insurers for whom the producer is licensed to market insurance; and
- ▶ contact information such as business address, phone number, email and website address,

To do a search go to <https://secure.utah.gov/cas/search?page=index>.

Forces for Change

There are times when forces come together to create a much needed change. In this case the change was from office hours to 24/7, paper to electronic, snail mail to email, and from "the check is in the mail" to electronic funds transfer.

The forces creating these changes were:

- 1) the passage of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act at the end of 1999;
- 2) Governor Leavitt's push in 2000 to have as many state services on-line as possible; and
- 3) the installation of a computer system at the department to facilitate e-commerce;

For those unfamiliar with the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, this federal legislation allowed financial institutions to get into the business of selling insur-

ance. At the same time the bill gave state insurance regulators three years to enact uniform agent licensing laws and regulations. If half or more of the states failed to meet this three year deadline, the feds would put their own uniform licensing standards in place.

At the time these forces began to come together the Insurance Department had 37,054 licensed producers; the number is now 46,507. While the department's workload has increased the state's budget has shrunk, increasing the demand to get the most out of our workforce. As a result, going electronic has been a natural route to take.

To meet the growing demands of those we regulate, meet the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act's three year deadline and Governor Leavitt's challenge to make our services accessible 24/7, the department took the following steps:

- **In 1999:**
 - the department linked into two nationwide producer data base systems to facilitate the exchange of disciplinary and licensing information as well as to create the basis for standardizing licensing laws throughout the nation.
- **In 2000:**
 - an interactive consumer complaint form was placed on the web, making it possible to complete and file it electronically;
 - agents were given the ability to file their 200,000+ company appointments and terminations on-line; and
 - an electronic billing system was established for appointments, terminations and rate and form filing transactions.
- **In 2001:**
 - COSMOS, a new computer system, was installed to facilitate e-commerce transactions.

➤ **In 2002:**

- non-resident producers and agencies are able to file and pay for their new and renewal insurance licenses electronically. Information from their applications are automatically integrated into the database;
- resident producers and agencies are able to file their new and renewal licenses electronically; and
- insurers are able to file their policy rates and forms electronically.

➤ **In 2003:**

- insurers are able to renew their licenses electronically;
- a Company and Agent Search program is made available on the web; and
- by year end 98% of the appointments and terminations were done electronically.

➤ **In 2004:**

- “Live Help on Line” is provided as an option to telephone and email for those wanting to communicate with the department.

This is only the beginning.

C.E. Requirements

The continuing education (C.E.) law currently in effect for insurance producers requires 5 hours for each line of authority they hold and 3 hours of ethics. The minimum number of hours required is 12 for producers with one line of authority, and the maximum is 23 hours for producers with four or more lines of authority. At least half of the total C.E. hours must be taken in a classroom, and no more than half of the classroom hours can be provided by an insurer the producer is associated with.

Producers who hold a variable contract line of authority have C.E. requirements that must be filled for the NASD. It should be noted that by completing the NASD C.E. requirements a producer is also

completing their Utah insurance C.E. requirements.

Why are we reviewing C.E. requirements if nothing changed during this years legislature? Because licensees are still confused about what those requirements are.

To be sure a licensee can prove in the case of an audit that he or she has taken the courses they have indicated, the licensee should make sure they keep the course completion certificate on file. If a certificate is not received within 60 days of completing a course, contact the provider and request one.

The department’s website <http://www.insurance.utah.gov/CEIndex.html> contains an updated list of providers offering classroom, correspondence, and on-line courses. There is also a “Course Calendar” of C.E. courses being held in Utah and in neighboring states. This calendar is updated regularly.

Producers are strongly encouraged to obtain a professional designation. A licensee with the following professional designations may use the continuing education hours required to maintain their designation to meet their insurance C.E. requirements: CLU, ChFC, CPCU, and RHU with completion of the PACE program. Other designations that also require continuing education are: CFP, REBC, CIC, CPSR, ACSR, CISR, SOFE and IRES.

Current Med Sup Rates On-Line

Consumers can now compare **current** Medicare Supplement (Med Sup) rates of all insurers marketing Med Sup coverage in Utah. Instead of Med Sup insurers giving us their rates annually, they now access their information on our website to update their rates as needed.

Consumers using the site can see by the date on each table when the rates were last updated and, if they wish, they can contact the individual noted on a table to determine if the rates are up-to-date.

To access this site go to <http://www.insurance.utah.gov/medigap/index.htm>.
